UTRU Quality Standards for Teacher Residency Programs

Overview of Elements and Standards

The mission of Urban Teacher Residency United (UTRU) is to build and manage a national network of high performing urban teacher residencies (UTRs) dedicated to accelerating student achievement through the training, support and retention of excellent urban teachers. To this end, UTRU has developed standards, which identify, define, and describe the specific program design elements that are essential for a quality UTR. These quality standards act as the foundation for the network's programmatic and learning activities. UTRU utilizes these standards to support individual program development as well as a dynamic professional learning community in which best practices are developed and disseminated.

The UTRU network standards were developed in collaboration with the three founding residency programs: Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), Boettcher Teacher's Program (BTP), and the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR). UTRU also engaged a variety of other stakeholders and experts in the field of education in the development process. These are currently practice-based standards based upon the early success of the three founding UTRs; they will become research-based as UTRU partners participate in evaluation efforts over time. They establish a hypothesis for assessment and evaluation to test whether quality design leads to increased student achievement.

The standards that follow identify six core elements of UTRs and a set of related standards that define what quality looks like within each element. Additionally, for each standard within each element, UTRU has developed a set of model indicators with corresponding rubrics detailing quality at three levels (emerging, applying, and integrating). The quality descriptors within the three levels are meant to be cumulative, such that "emerging" integrates and expands upon what is described in "applying" and so on. The standards and corresponding quality rubrics are meant to be an assessment and program development tool for both emerging and established residency programs.

Element I: Program Vision

1. Mission Statement: The UTR partners articulate the need for and the value proposition of the UTR program for all stakeholders. The partnership identifies and clarifies the core values, purpose, and vision of their UTR.

2. Vision of Effective Teaching: The UTR partners have developed a unified set of standards that define the program's vision of an effective urban teacher, including specific skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to fundamentally improve student achievement. The VET drives the design, development, and delivery of all program elements, including: recruitment and selection of residents, the residency year curriculum, and post-residency years. The VET also drives the recruitment, selection, and development of mentors acting as teacher educators in the program.

<u>**Model Indicators:**</u>
   a. Involvement of stakeholders
   b. Review of existing professional teaching standards and research
   c. Comprehensive, organized framework
   d. Responsiveness to local context
   e. Program alignment

Element II: UTR Program Management

1. Strong Partnership between a High-Need District, an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), and Other Eligible Partners: The UTR is created and sustained by a strong partnership between various entities that may include: a high-need school district, an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), and/or other eligible partners (e.g., state government office, Local Education Agency (LEA), nonprofit, charter management organization). The partnership clearly articulates the value provided by the UTR to the individual partners and in return provides the UTR with the public commitment, financial and in-kind resources needed to help start and sustain a high-quality UTR. The UTR is managed by a lead partner but has oversight from the broader partnership.

Model Indicators:
    a. Partner selection
    b. Value proposition
    c. Shared ownership
    d. Designated lead partner
    e. Streamlined decision-making
    f. Partner communication

2. Effective Staffing Model: The UTR is responsible for building a professional staff to deliver an effective residency program and achieve financial sustainability.

Model Indicators:
    a. Staffing plan
    b. Budget
    c. Rigorous hiring and selection of Program Director
    d. Role of Program Director

3. Sustaining Funding Model: The UTR has developed clear financial projections and has secured reliable funding streams to support both startup and ongoing operations.

Model Indicators:
    a. Financial commitments of partners
    b. Budget
    c. Fundraising
    d. Dedicated staff person
    e. Board development

4. Commitment to Local Assessment and Evaluation: The UTR invests in ongoing data collection, analysis and evaluation to monitor program operations and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the residency model, as defined by growth in student achievement.

Model Indicators:
    a. Assessment/evaluation staff member or consultant
    b. Data collection and management system
    c. Measure of student achievement
    d. Access to data on graduate and mentor performance

5. Transparent, Legally Binding Agreements between the UTR and all Residency Participants: The lead partner oversees contracts with all UTR partners.

<u>**Model Indicators:**</u>
    a.   Mentor contract
    b.   Resident contract
    c.   Training sites
    d.   Contracts

Element III: Resident Recruitment and Selection

1. Alignment with District Goals: The UTR recruits, selects, and trains teacher candidates who meet the particular needs of the urban school district in which they will serve.

Model Indicators:
    a. Clear targets mutually agreed upon by key partners
    b. Process to revise targets

2. Integrated Approach to Recruitment: The UTR is innovative in its recruitment efforts to attract a large pool of teacher candidates for hard-to-staff schools and in subject areas where teachers are in short supply. The UTR integrates recruitment initiatives into a comprehensive strategy to address teacher quality and district need.

Model Indicators:
    a. Effective use of resources
    b. Clearly articulated eligibility requirements
    c. Clearly articulated value proposition for resident
    d. Effective and targeted marketing of program
    e. High-touch, personal recruiting strategies

3. Rigorous and Competitive Selection Process: The UTR builds a professional, results-oriented team of stakeholders to select residents through an unbiased and equitable process. Selection is aligned to the UTR's Vision of Effective Teaching and utilizes a multi-step process to identify candidates who demonstrate the teacher competencies most predictive of success in a high-needs school.

Model Indicators:
    a. Clear selection criteria aligned to program's Vision of Effective Teaching
    b. Rating protocols applied consistently
    c. Multiple stakeholder involvement
    d. Multi-step process
    e. Ongoing data tracking and analysis
    f. Efficient and comprehensive process

Element IV: Mentor Recruitment, Selection, and Development

1. Rigorous Mentor Standards: The UTR develops and utilizes a set of Mentor Standards to drive mentor recruitment, selection, training, and assessment. Mentor Standards clearly define the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of an effective mentor for an urban teacher-in-training and are aligned to the VET.

Model Indicators:
  a. Involvement of stakeholders
  b. Integration of research and best practice in mentoring
  c. Comprehensive, organized framework
  d. Program alignment

2. Integrated Approach to Recruitment: The UTR is innovative in its efforts to recruit a cohort of talented, experienced teacher leaders to serve as mentor teachers during the classroom apprenticeship.

Model Indicators:
  a. Cultivation of viable training sites
  b. Proactive recruitment strategies
  c. Targeted eligibility requirements
  d. Clearly articulated roles and responsibilities for mentors
  e. Value package for mentors

3. Competitive Selection Process: The UTR utilizes a performance-based selection process, aligned to Mentor Standards, to identify and select outstanding classroom teachers who demonstrate the potential to be excellent mentors. The UTR ensures that the selection process is both rigorous and equitable.

Model Indicators:
  a. Rigorous selection criteria
  b. Multiple stakeholder involvement
  c. Comprehensive selection process
  d. Developed rating protocols
  e. Creation of a pipeline of mentor teachers
  f. Data tracking and analysis

4. High-Quality Professional Development for Mentors: The UTR facilitates ongoing professional development for mentors that is aligned to Mentor Standards, providing the specific training, resources, and support necessary to facilitate their work as teacher educators for the UTR.

Model Indicators:
a. Ongoing training and development
b. Differentiated professional development curriculum
c. Site-based, tailored support
d. Mentor engagement with coursework
e. Structured opportunities for collaborative mentoring
f. Joint mentor-resident professional development
g. Leadership opportunities

5. Mentor Assessment and Accountability: The UTR utilizes a multi-faceted mentor assessment process, aligned to Mentor Standards, to support on-going mentor development and to hold mentors accountable for their work as teacher educators for the UTR. Mentor assessment data informs mentor selection, remediation, and dismissal.

Model Indicators:
a. Protocol for ongoing assessment of mentors
b. Performance-based assessment tools
c. Evidence-based assessment
d. Application of assessment information
e. Protocol for mentor remediation and dismissal

Element V: Residency Year

1. Integrated Residency Year Curriculum: The UTR utilizes the Vision of Effective Teaching (VET) to outline the desired learning outcomes and develop a detailed scope and sequence for the curriculum of the residency training year. The residency year curriculum embodies a set of standards-based learning experiences and assessment activities that proactively link coursework (theory) and the classroom apprenticeship (practice) in order to better prepare graduates for success in the urban classroom.

Model Indicators:
    a. Identified learning outcomes
    b. Scope and sequence
    c. Integration of theory and practice
    d. Program alignment

2. Selection and Development of Training Sites: The UTR actively recruits and rigorously selects schools to host training for residents. During the residency year, residents apprentice in schools where the school leadership commits to supporting the residency program and there is a cadre of quality teachers to act as mentors. The program strives to utilize and cultivate training sites that can house cohorts of mentor-resident pairs in order to provide increased opportunities for emotional, social, and professional support and development.

Model Indicators:
    a. Recruitment and outreach
    b. Rigorous selection criteria
    c. Cohort placement
    d. Committed school leadership
    e. Alignment to UTR
    f. Dedicated point person

3. Rigorous and Aligned Coursework: The UTR offers master's level teacher preparation coursework, in partnership with an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), as part of the integrated residency year curriculum. The coursework is tightly aligned to the Vision of Effective Teaching and linked to the classroom apprenticeship. Course content is based on the best available research and empirically validated practice in order to provide residents with the content expertise and skills to teach effectively in urban schools.

Model Indicators:
    a. Mechanisms for alignment to UTR
    b. VET drives the design or redesign of course content and sequence
    c. Integration of theory and practice
    d. Responsiveness to district context
    e. Targeted course instructor selection
    f. Instructor engagement with UTR
    g. Assessment and evaluation

4. Intensive Classroom Apprenticeship: As part of the integrated residency year curriculum, the UTR structures a full year of practical field experiences, including an apprenticeship to a mentor teacher, to support residents in developing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions of an effective teacher. The classroom apprenticeship is tightly aligned to the Vision of Effective Teaching and linked to the coursework.

Model Indicators:
    a. Integration of theory and practice
    b. Classroom-based apprenticeship to a mentor teacher
    c. VET drives the design of classroom apprenticeship
    d. Clear process for matching residents and mentors
    e. Gradual release of responsibility
    f. Lead teaching opportunities
    g. Ongoing classroom-based coaching and support
    h. Resident engagement with training site
    i. Field-based experiences

5. Resident Assessment and Accountability: The UTR utilizes a comprehensive resident assessment process to evaluate teaching proficiency and efficacy as defined by the Vision of Effective Teaching, graduating only residents with potential to become effective teachers of record in the district post-residency. Resident assessment supports program alignment and the integration of theory and practice, tracking evidence of resident performance in all areas of the residency experience including the classroom apprenticeship and coursework.

Model Indicators:
    a. Comprehensive resident assessment plan
    b. Performance-based rubric
    c. Capstone project
    d. Protocol for resident remediation and dismissal

Element VI: Post-Residency

1. Strategic Placement of Graduates: The UTR creates and sustains partnerships within the district to develop and implement a high impact placement strategy for its graduates consistent with the program's mission and vision. The program proactively assists graduates in finding placements in high-need district schools, where they have the opportunity to serve students in traditionally underserved communities. To the extent possible, the program facilitates cohort placement for its graduates in order to provide increased opportunities for emotional, social, and professional support and development and school transformation.

Model Indicators:
    a. Aligned placement strategy
    b. Cultivation of placement sites
    c. Active placement services
    d. Data collection and analysis

2. Alignment to UTR: The UTR plans for the provision of robust induction services to all graduates as teachers of record. Induction services are delivered by the UTR itself or through an explicit, coordinated partnership with the district or other induction provider. The UTR ensures that induction services are tailored and aligned to the UTR and strategically utilize existing resources and best practices in induction in order to support teachers to be effective in their placement context.

Model Indicators:
    a. Partnership agreement
    b. Continuity with residency year
    c. Induction coordinator
    d. Robust data collection and analysis

3. High-Quality Professional Development for Induction Coaches: The UTR is committed to providing and supporting ongoing, tailored professional development for induction coaches to hone and refine their ability to support UTR graduates in the field toward the end of increasing student achievement in all graduate classrooms.

Model Indicators:
    a. Rigorous induction coach selection
    b. Induction coach engagement with UTR
    c. Intensive support for effective coaching
    d. Structured support for coach collaboration
    e. Continued professional development on effective urban teaching
    f. Assessment and evaluation of coaches

4. Intensive Teacher Development Programming: The UTR ensures that graduates receive personalized teacher development programming, including one-on-one induction coaching and ongoing professional development with peers that covers a continuum of new teacher learning and leadership training.

<u>**Model Indicators:**</u>
   a. Site-based induction coaching and support
   b. Ongoing access to classroom-based coaching services
   c. Professional development for all UTR graduates
   d. Leadership opportunities
   e. Graduate engagement with UTR
   f. Active UTR graduate network
   g. Assessment and evaluation of graduates as teachers of record